



Bay County Currents

A publication for, about and by County employees

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December 2013

Volume 9, Issue 12

Focus On..... I&C!

In utilities we have a situation similar to a NASCAR racing team where you have a driver and you have several pit crew members. If you are a plant operator, you are the driver. The driver has gauges(instruments) and buttons or switches (controls) and this equipment must work at all times for the driver and team to be successful and win.

When you glimpse at the pit crew at Utilities, you may still not find the real unsung heroes. Why? Because the Instrumentation and Controls (I&C) Technicians could be anywhere there is a piece of wire or a drop of solder. They have the demanding task of maintaining all of the control logic processors and hardware that includes all of the gauges, buttons, and switches. To the lay person, that may not sound like much, but they are responsible for thousands of pieces of equipment including PLC's (programmable logic controllers), MCC's (motor control centers), SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition), switchgear, breakers, pH meters, Turbidimeters, just to name a few. These crew members have to not only make sure the driver has all his gauges and buttons working during the race, but also have to be ready to repair equipment in short order or the team can lose the race.

When the Water Plant or the Waste Water Plant wins an award that is similar to winning a championship and when the team picture is taken, these unsung heroes may or may not be there. WHY? Because the difference between utilities and NASCAR is the race never ends, it is a 24 hour, 7 days per week, every week event. These dedicated Bay County employees that are rarely seen, keep the engine running!

Mike Nelson

District I

George B. Gainer

District II

William T. Dozier

District III

Guy M. Tunnell

District IV

Mike Thomas

District V

Commission Meetings

December 3, 2013

December 17, 2013

9:00 a.m.

Bay County
Government Complex



Pictured above: Steven Cupples, Dane Thomas, John Ford, Jim Davey (Supervisor) and Ronald Jones.

County Manager's Corner

First, I want to wish all a very **Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukah, and Happy New Year.** May 2014 bring health and prosperity to all!

Second, I want to pass on a thought for the New Year. We all have been hearing about the “going green” trend in an effort to preserve our environment for future generations, which of course is a goal we can all buy into. However, read the story below regarding how the current generation may see things differently than some of us “old-timers”:

“At the store, the young cashier suggested to me the other day that I should bring my own grocery bags because plastic bags were not good for the environment. I apologized and explained, “*We didn’t have this green thing back in my earlier days*”. The clerk responded, that’s our problem today....your generation did not care enough to save our environment for future generations!

She was right—our generation did not have the “green thing” in its day.

Back then, we returned milk bottles, soda bottles and beer bottles to the store. The store sent them back to the plant to be washed and sterilized and refilled, so it could use the same bottles over and over. So they really **WERE** recycled. But, we did not have the “green thing” back then.

Grocery stores bagged our groceries in brown paper bags that we **REUSED** for numerous things, including garbage bags and book covers! But, we did not have the “green thing” back then.

We walked up stairs because they did not have an escalator or elevator in every store and office building. We walked to the grocery store and did not climb into a 300 horsepower machine every time we had to go 2 blocks. But, we did not have the “green thing” back then.

Back then, we washed the baby’s diapers because we did not have the throw-away kind. We dried clothes on a line, not in an energy beast gobbling up 220 volts. We actually made use of wind and solar power!

Back then, we had **ONE** TV or radio in the house...not a TV in every room. And the TV had a screen about the size of Frisbee, not one the size of Montana. In the kitchen, we blended and stirred by hand because we did not have electric machines to do everything for us. When we packaged a fragile item to send in the mail, we used wadded up old newspaper instead of Styrofoam or plastic bubble wrap. Back then we did not get on an electric treadmill or go to a specialized health club for exercise, because our push mower ran on human power.

We drank from a fountain instead of a cup or plastic bottle when we needed a drink of water. We replaced razor blades in a razor instead of disposing of the disposable razor and we refilled writing pens with ink instead of buying a new pen. But we did not have the “green thing” back then.

Back then kids walked to school (uphill, both ways!) instead of turning their moms into a 24-hour taxi service. We had one electrical outlet in a room, not an entire bank of sockets to power a dozen appliances.

So, here is a message from this old-timer: folks in our generation don’t like being older in the first place, **so it doesn’t take much guff from the young kids to set us off!!!**

Happy New Year! Be safe!

***Ed Smith,
County Manager***





Christmas Cactus photo by: Julie McConnell

Holiday Cactus

If you are looking for an easy to grow, colorful indoor flowering plant, look no further than the Holiday Cactus. The two main types are Thanksgiving Cactus and Christmas Cactus. They have similar care requirements but as the name indicates they bloom at different times.

When purchasing a new plant, don't assume that it is "Thanksgiving" or "Christmas" based on when it was blooming at the store. Growers know how to manipulate the plants for flowering based on market demand. Instead look at the leaf shape and anther colors for positive identification. Thanksgiving cacti have pointed teeth on leaf margins and yellow anthers in the flowers. Christmas cacti have flattened leaves with rounded teeth on the margins and purple anthers (as seen in picture at left).

heating and cooling vents. Keep soil slightly moist, but take care not to overwater.

They can tolerate some drying out, but too much can cause flower buds to drop. In

our mild climate you may keep your Holiday Cactus outside most of the year, but protect it from full sun during the summer months and bring it indoors if temperatures are forecast to fall below 50° F.

Fertilize Holiday cacti with a general purpose houseplant fertilizer from April until August following the label directions. To make your plants fuller, prune or pinch in June. This will encourage more branching. Holiday cacti are easy to propagate. Take those pieces you pinched off and place in a lightweight potting soil or vermiculite. They will grow roots and you have new plants to share.

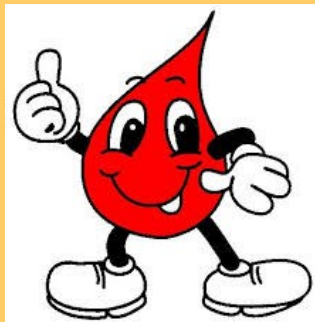
So, how do you control flowering time? Holiday cacti form flower buds based on two environmental factors, photoperiod (length of daylight) and temperature. They are considered "short day" plants which mean that they bloom when light is reduced to 8-10 hours a day, but this description can be a little misleading. The true influencing factor is not the number of daylight hours, but rather the number of hours in **uninterrupted** darkness. One way to initiate flower bud development is to place the plant in a dark closet from 5 p.m. until 8 a.m. for 20-25 days straight. This treatment will stimulate flower bud development. Another factor that influences flower bud initiation (even without light control) is the temperature at night. The ideal night temperature for flower bud formation is between 55 and 68° F. Temperatures above 68° or below 50° F can prevent flower bud development.

To learn more about caring for your Holiday Cactus visit the link below or contact Horticulture Agent Julie McConnell at UF/IFAS Extension Bay County Office 784-6105 or click on this link <http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/indoor/flowering/hgic1554.html>. All programs are open to all persons regardless of race, color, age, sex, handicap or national origin.

A Special Note from One Blood!

OneBlood would like to thank **Bay County Employees** for sharing your power by donating the Gift of Life. Your continued support is vital in helping us provide blood donations required by patients each day in the hospitals that we serve.

At the Bay County Employee's blood drives on December 4th and 5th, we had 122 registered donors and were able to collect 112 lifesaving blood donations. Each donation can save as many as three lives and your efforts have made a difference to many people in their time of need.



OneBlood is proud to supply **ALL** the blood and blood products to the Bay County Hospitals.

**Thank you for your community support
Bay County Employees!**

BENEFITS OF QUITTING TOBACCO

- 3 months after you quit smoking, your lung function improves up to 30%.
- 1 year after you quit, your risk of a heart attack is cut in half.
- 10 years after you quit smoking, your risk of dying from lung cancer is about half that of a smoker's.
- Tobacco Free Florida offers free quit services that can double your chances of success.

3 EASY & FREE WAYS TO QUIT



Talk to a Quit Coach® who can help you quit tobacco.
1-877-U-CAN-NOW
1-877-822-6669



Online help quitting tobacco is only a few clicks away.
www.quitnow.net/florida



Looking for local face-to-face help? Find a center near you.
www.ahtctobacco.com

For more information, speak to your employer or visit: tobaccofreeflorida.com



PREPARE YOUR OWN TAX RETURN FOR **FREE** THIS YEAR

**You Earned It.
Claim It.**

If you made \$58,000 or less in 2013 you qualify for **FREE INCOME TAX PREPARATION**

MyFreeTaxes.com/UnitedWayofNWFL

Your AGI must be less than \$58,000

You will need to have an E-mail address

You will need to know last years Pin

What to do if I don't know my Pin?

look up your Pin online by visiting: www.irs.gov

Call the IRS at 1-866-704-7388

Toll-Free & E-mail assistance at 1-855-MY-TX-HELP

or Email our support desk at: Info@myfreetaxes.com

Free Technical Support at 1-866-HRBLOCK, Ext. 2

(assistance is available from 9:00am - to 10:00pm local time)

Each year many of us don't have access to affordable tax preparation services or are unaware of programs like the EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit) that can put hundreds of dollars back into your pocket.



Use the link below to access the website and begin the self-preparation of your Tax Return: MyFreeTaxes.com/UnitedWayofNWFL



Troy University is now providing transfer students scholarships to GCSC and Chipola students. Please see the links below for more info or contact our office at 850-747-0634 for more info! The scholarships range in \$2000 to \$3000 for GPA's above a 3.25.

Link to Newsletter regarding Community College scholarship announcement:

<http://www.troy.edu/news/articles/2013/09/troy-offers-community-college-scholarships.html>

Link to the scholarship application: <https://forms.troy.edu/forms/scholarship/admissions/TransferMeritandTransferAchievementScholarship.html>

Local Fire Departments Help Stock Local Food Banks!

It could have been just any other rainy Friday: But, on this particular November 15th Friday, it included a lot of fire trucks, including a ladder truck, flashing lights and an invasion of live TV and radio interviews. When it was all said and done, The Bay County Fire Department, Lynn Haven Fire Department, WPAP 92.5 and Sunny 98.5 spent \$2,100 in donations for the Annual Harvest Food Drive for the Salvation Army and the

Panama City Rescue Mission. It's difficult to put a dollar amount on the amount of food donations, but two huge bins and 27 Wal-Mart shopping carts were overflowing with food, thanks to the spirit of giving from our community. All of the food was given to the Salvation Army and Rescue Mission to stock their food Banks. Both organizations expressed their gratitude to everyone that made the event so successful. WJHG, Channel 7 reported "The drive will ultimately feed around 1,000 families in the Bay County area." The event lasted for twelve hours; but the work doesn't stop there. The department is continuing its food drive for the holidays through December 20th. So many families need our support, hopefully we can continue to help. Shane Collins of Sunny 98.5 summed it up best by saying "People Helping People!"



Thank you to all who gave, and continue to give!





On November 6, 2013, the Emergency Operations Center played host to the fifth grade class from Lynn Haven Elementary. This was the second year EOC has hosted for Lynn Haven, and will continue to do so on an annual basis.

A total of 150 students and 10 adults toured the facility. On the itinerary was a demonstration of the 911 Dispatch Center, a fire truck and gear display, an ambulance and EMS display, an overview of Incident Command Center, and a presentation of emergency preparedness.

"The students gained priceless information on emergency services and the jobs that the staff performs," said Brian Hardin, Communications Supervisor. "We hope the children take the information home and teach their family members the importance of emergency planning."

The students will complete a project that involves preparing an emergency kit and writing a family emergency plan.



Lets hear it for.....



Congratulations to:
Stan Couthard and Seth Imhof on
their promotions to Lieutenant.

~~~~~

Liane Harding, EMS paramedic, received her US citizenship on November 8th after living in the US since high school. Liane has been with EMS since 1994; she's currently working on her master degree in Public Administration. We are very proud and happy for Liane!



# Library Family Christmas



## Tuesday

December 10th

@6:00 pm

## Stories, Songs & Crafts

### A visit from Santa & Mrs. Claus



Refreshments will  
be served!



Sponsored in part by the  
Gulf Coast Woman's  
Club

898 West 11th Street  
522-2118  
[www.nwrls.com](http://www.nwrls.com)





# *Risky Business*

*“A Publication of the Risk Management Department”*

## **“Risky Business Would Like To Wish You A Happy And Safe Holiday Season”**

The staff in Risk Management Department would like to take this opportunity to wish all Bay County Employees and your Families a Safe and Happy Holiday Season. The following is a list safety suggestions to think about this Holiday Season!

### **Make sure you have a safe holiday season by being mindful of these common hazards:**

- **Motor vehicles. Motor vehicle accidents are a leading cause of accidental injury in the United States, and accident rates always increase with holiday travel. Take these precautions when you hit the road:**  
Make sure your car is in good repair. Be especially aware of safety-critical devices like headlights and tail lights, turn signals, brakes, tires, and the horn. Drive carefully. The four most dangerous driving behaviors: speeding, aggressive driving, inattention, and drowsiness.
- **Planning to hang Christmas lights? Falls are another leading cause of accidental death or injury off the job. If you're using a ladder at home, be sure to:**  
Inspect your ladder. It should have nonskid feet, straight side rails, no visible damage, and even spacing between the rungs. Don't under extend yourself. Make sure the top of your extension ladder clears the level of your roof by at least 3 feet so you can get on and off safely. Also, set your ladder feet at least one quarter of the vertical distance from the wall for example, if you're climbing onto a 12-foot roof, your ladder feet should be at least 3 feet from the wall's base.  
Use stepladders safely. Don't use a stepladder unless it's fully unfolded with its braces locked. Don't stand on its top rung, and don't climb it on the back side. Watch out for electrical hazards. Don't use metal ladders if you're working near electrical wires. Be a team player. Don't work alone. If you fall, you'll want someone near by to provide first aid and summon emergency help.
- **Prescription drugs. Prescription drugs are killing far more Americans than illegal drugs these days. Be sure to:**  
Ask about alcohol. You shouldn't drink at holiday parties if you take certain medications. Ask your pharmacist about alcohol consumption.  
Read labels. Prescription medication should be used only as your doctor indicates; don't take more medication, or take it more often, than prescribed.

## BAY COUNTY MOSQUITO CONTROL ~ COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Bay County Mosquito Control was proud to participate in the 7th Annual Celebration of Service/Veteran's Day Flag Raising at Southport Elementary School on November 8th, 2013. The event focused on paying tribute to local heroes in the community, but also focused on some of the services supplied by Bay County.

The campus and class rooms were packed with over thirty booths and exhibits from the area with representatives from the United States Coast Guard, the Marine Corps, Bay County Fire Department, and the Bay County Animal Rescue Service, just to mention a few. The students and teachers were very active with questions and enthusiasm. We gave them literature along with promotional items to insure they had Mosquito Control contact information.

Kirt Winters and Eric Cope from Bay County Mosquito Control provided a look at the biology and life cycle of the mosquito with hands-on demonstrations of mosquito eggs, larva, adult mosquitoes and gambusia mosquito eating minnows. The exhibit concentrated on the avoidance of mosquitoes through control techniques and prevention through the five D's.

Dusk/Dawn- Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active

Dress- Cover up with long sleeves and long pants

Deet- Use a mosquito repellent on bare skin and clothing

Drain- Remove standing water in which mosquitoes can lay eggs



# DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS!

|    |                                                                 |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | John Rosin, Dolores Bonebright                                  |
| 2  | Dorothy Robbins, James George, Benjamin Phillips James Faulkner |
| 3  | Brian Welborn                                                   |
| 4  | Janet Carter, Donnie Brock, John Conrad, Wendi Sellers,         |
| 5  | Daniel Sawyer                                                   |
| 6  | Curtis Smith, James Firimont                                    |
| 7  | Christopher Bowser                                              |
| 8  | Lesil Taylor, Michelle Gutierrez, Casey Sebold, Ronald Rudd     |
| 10 | Steven Gibbs                                                    |
| 11 | Richard Nabors, Frank Burgess                                   |
| 12 | Charles Floyd                                                   |
| 14 | Mark Bowen, Micael Rose, Steven Roberson                        |
| 15 | Martin Jacobson                                                 |
| 17 | Francisco Rodriguez, Christopher Lee, Michael Miller            |
| 18 | Larry Carnley                                                   |
| 19 | Chris Fox, Scott Hair                                           |
| 21 | David kelley, Patrick Gorman                                    |
| 22 | Danny Gilbert, Curtis Young                                     |
| 23 | Christy Smith, Richard Robinson, Tamar Nissen                   |
| 25 | James Hill                                                      |
| 27 | Ronald Hill, Carl Erickson                                      |
| 28 | Ronald Farris                                                   |
| 29 | Chyrl Boyer, Brian Hardin, Daniel Page                          |
| 30 | John Crader, Jason Jowers                                       |
| 31 | Dionte Clark                                                    |

If you do not want your birthday to be listed in the newsletter, please notify Vonda Hester at [vhester@baycountyll.gov](mailto:vhester@baycountyll.gov).

## Service Anniversaries

### 5 Yesrs

|               |                        |
|---------------|------------------------|
| Sonya Bird    | Utility Services       |
| Dana Fox      | Utility Services       |
| James Dunkin  | Wastewater Systems     |
| Raymond Johns | Water Systems Division |
| Howard Jones  | Water Systems Division |

### 10 Years

|               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| Robert Vinson | Mosquito Control |
|---------------|------------------|

### 15 Years

|                |                        |
|----------------|------------------------|
| Dennis Stanley | Builder's Services Div |
| Curtis Smith   | Roads & Bridges        |
| Deric Wilson   | Roads & Bridges        |

### 20 Years

|             |                 |
|-------------|-----------------|
| Larry Hobbs | Roads & Bridges |
|-------------|-----------------|

## Welcome!

|                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Conrad, John     | Roads & Bridges     |
| Klein, Kelley    | Animal Control      |
| Bowden, Jason    | Fire Services       |
| Bowser, Chris    | Fire Services       |
| Bradley, Angela  | Transit-Fixed Route |
| Culbreth, Sandra | Transit-Fixed Route |
| Putnam, Nicole   | Bay County Library  |
| Brown, Kimmy     | Builder's Services  |



FOR FREE QUIT TIPS AND COUNSELING IN BAY COUNTY, CALL (850) 872-4455 EXT. 1136





# COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

| December 2013                                                                           |                                                                                            |                                                                      |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sunday                                                                                  | Monday                                                                                     | Tuesday                                                              | Wednesday                                                                                                                         | Thursday                                                                                                                  | Friday                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Saturday                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 1<br>  | 2<br>Sculpture Classes @ Visual Arts Center<br><br>Paint your art out @ Visual Arts Center | 3                                                                    | 4<br>Pottery Class @ Visual Arts Center<br><br>Acrylic Painting Classes @ The Palms                                               | 5<br>Figure Drawing @ City Arts Cooperative                                                                               | 6<br>Adopt - A - Pet - : Bay County Animal Control will be at the Bay County Government Center with adoptable adorable pets!<br> | 7<br>Dickens of a Christmas in Downtown PC 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.<br>                                                                                        |
| 8<br> | 9                                                                                          | 10<br>Animal Encounters @ Science and Discovery Center of NW Florida | 11<br>The Addams Family at the Marina Civic Center<br><br>Acrylic Painting Classes @ The Palms                                    | 12<br>Beginner Belly Dance Classes @ City Arts Cooperative<br><br>Figure Drawing with H. Clements @ City Arts Cooperative | 13<br>Pilot Clubs 16th Annual Luminaries of Love 6:00 p.m. McKenzie Park<br>                                                     | 14<br>Panama City Beach Optimist Christmas Parade 4:00 p.m. Pier Park<br><br>Dickens of a Christmas in Downtown PC 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.<br><br>Junior League of Panama City's 5K Reindeer Race/Santa Shuttle 7:00 a.m. St. Andrews State Park |
|                                                                                         | 16<br>Sculpture Classes @ Visual Arts Center                                               | 17                                                                   | 18<br><br>Acrylic Painting Classes @ The Palms | 19<br>Figure Drawing @ City Arts Cooperative                                                                              | 20<br>Disney Live! Marina Civic Center 13:00 & 6:00<br>                                                                         | 21<br>Dickens of a Christmas in Downtown PC 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 22                                                                                      | 23                                                                                         | 24<br>Sculpture Classes @ Visual Arts Center                         | 25<br>                                         | 26<br>Pottery Class @ Visual Arts Center of Northwest Florida                                                             | 27                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 28                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 29                                                                                      | 30<br>8th Annual Ball Drop Pier Park, Front Beach Rd.                                      | 31                                                                   |                                               |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |



DECEMBER 2013

## HOLIDAY GIVING MADE EASY – AND HEALTHY

This year think outside of the box when you shop for family and friends on your list. Instead of gift cards, give gifts that inspire healthier living. Here are a few ideas:

### For the Cook

- **Food Games:** There are many trivia games for foodies. Check out the one that's like the legendary "letter tile" game.
- **Play Food:** Kids love to play with food. Consider a kitchen chemistry kit, play food and/or play cookware and utensils for the little ones.
- **Dress for Success:** Inspire a chef with a nice apron or coat. You can also add wooden spoons or other small kitchen tools in the pockets for fun.
- **Spice it Up:** Cooking with herbs and spices has health benefits. Purchase a magnetic strip with see-through spice tins and fill them up with exotic varieties.
- **Healthy Recipes:** Cooks and foodies love recipes. Buy a healthy food cookbook, a daily tear-off recipe calendar or an annual subscription to a magazine or an online recipe site.
- **Cooking Aids:** Encourage healthy eating with a juicer, blender or food dehydrator. You can also go with a rice cooker or veggie steamer.

### For the Person Who Has Everything

- **Thermal Totes:** Purchase a durable thermal tote or lunch bag to inspire healthy snacking (and lunching) on-the-go.
- **Reusable Bags:** Help the environment by giving reusable shopping bags. There are a variety of designs to choose from.
- **Tea Mug:** Give healthy antioxidants. Fill a unique tea cup and saucer with herbal, green or white tea bags. Include agave nectar (a natural sweetener) and a pretty spoon.
- **Gift Baskets:** Consumable gifts leave less waste for the landfills. Try a healthy assortment of fruits, nuts, whole grain crackers, red wine and cheese.
- **Herb Garden:** Buy herb plants (or seeds and pots) to encourage your loved one to start a patio or windowsill garden.

IN THIS  
ISSUEHoliday Giving Made  
Easy – and HealthyStaying Healthy this  
Holiday SeasonAsk the  
DietitianFresh &  
Healthy Recipe



### For the Creative Types

- **Art Supplies:** Doing arts and crafts can help reduce stress. Inspire down time with pens, paints and paper, or a basket of yarn with crochet needles and a "how to" book.

### For the Exerciser

- **Workout Clothes:** A new gym bag, workout clothes and reusable water bottle may motivate a loved one to get physical. Include a one-month membership to the local gym.
- **Equipment:** Give a sports ball or balance ball, hand weights, a yoga mat or elastic bands for at-home exercising. Throw in a related exercise DVD.

Get creative and give a gift that they'll love, and that will love them back. Have a happy, healthy holiday season!

**Resources:** [www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com), [www.healthfinder.gov](http://www.healthfinder.gov), [www.health.nih.gov](http://www.health.nih.gov)

## STAYING HEALTHY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

It's always busy during the holiday season, and finding time to fit in the recommended 30-minutes of physical activity most days of the week can be a challenge. Did you know that you can get the same health benefits with three or more 10-minute intervals of activity each day?

Plan to be active this holiday season by creating opportunities to move and spend time with friends and family in the process. Here's how:

- **"Talk" the walk.** Instead of listening to music while you walk, make those long telephone calls you never seem to have time for during the holidays.
- **Park far away.** Sneak in exercise when you run errands this season by parking farther from the building (it makes you walk a greater distance).
- **Ditch the car.** Park in a central location in outdoor shopping centers, and walk to multiple stores instead of driving.
- **Walk the mall.** While you're at the mall, take a brisk lap or two first to see what's on sale. You can plan your purchases and exercise at the same time.



### DOWNLOAD THE FLORIDA BLUE MOBILE APP!

Take your health information on the road with the Florida Blue mobile app for your tablet or smartphone (iPhone® or Android™). Quickly access your plan and deductible, view your prescriptions and claims, find a doctor and more! Wherever you are – whenever you need it.



Download the free Florida Blue app from the iTunes App Store, Google Play or Amazon Apps.

- **Take the kids to the park.** Enjoy time with visiting cousins at the local park. Run, swing, play ball and ride bikes. Be adventurous and explore state parks, beaches and trails.
- **Try geocaching.** This is a high-tech scavenger hunt using GPS receivers. Check out [FloridaGeocaching.com](http://FloridaGeocaching.com) for information.
- **Be a team player.** With all of your loved ones in town, make a day of family football, volleyball, dodge ball or softball.
- **Take a walk (or run).** Walk the neighborhood to view holiday decorations and lights, or participate as a family in a local charity fun walk or run.
- **Be a kid again.** Play your favorite holiday music and dance like no one is watching. Get everyone together for Twister, Gestures, Wii sports or other active games.

Despite how busy the holiday season can be, find ways to stay active. You'll not only reduce stress, you may also bond with family members you don't see very often. And, it's a great way to support and encourage healthy habits that can last a lifetime. Now that's the best gift of all.

**Resources:** [acefitness.com](http://acefitness.com), [webmd.com](http://webmd.com)

## ask THE DIETITIAN:



**Q** I often stock up on vanilla extract for my holiday baking. What's the difference between pure vanilla extract and imitation vanilla extract?

**A** The main difference between pure vanilla extract and imitation vanilla extract is how they are made. Pure vanilla extract is made from the vanilla plant, while imitation vanilla is made from coal extract or conifer sapwood which mimics the taste of real vanilla.

Vanilla extract enhances flavor, and deciding which one to use is really about your personal preference. Here are a few things you might want to consider:

- Real vanilla is expensive to make and costs more than the imitation alternative.
- Real vanilla is best used in milk and puddings.
- Many of the flavors and compounds in real vanilla "burn off" in baking, which means in there is not much difference in taste between the two versions when baking.

Enjoy your baking season!

**Resources:** [www.cooksillustrated.com/tastetests/overview.asp?docid=18889](http://www.cooksillustrated.com/tastetests/overview.asp?docid=18889)

## fresh AND HEALTHY RECIPE OF THE MONTH



### MAPLE-ROASTED SWEET POTATOES

**Makes:** 12 servings, about ½ cup each

**Active Time:** 10 minutes

**Total Time:** 1 hour 10 minutes

#### Ingredients

|                                                                               |                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2 ½ pounds (about 8 cups) sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1 ½-inch pieces | 2 tablespoons butter, melted    |
| 1 ⅓ cup pure maple syrup                                                      | 1 tablespoons lemon juice       |
|                                                                               | ½ teaspoons salt                |
|                                                                               | Freshly ground pepper, to taste |

#### Preparation

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Arrange sweet potatoes in an even layer in a 9-by-13-inch glass baking dish. Combine maple syrup, butter, lemon juice, salt and pepper in small bowl. Pour the mixture over the sweet potatoes; toss to coat.

Cover and bake the sweet potatoes for 15 minutes. Uncover, stir and cook, stirring every 15 minutes, until tender and starting to brown, 45 to 50 minutes more.

#### Make Ahead Tip:

Cover and refrigerate for up to 1 day. Just before serving, reheat at 350°F until hot, about 15 minutes.

**Nutrition information per serving (1 cup):** 96 calories; 2 g fat (1 g sat, 0 g mono); 5 mg cholesterol; 19 g carbohydrates; 1 g protein; 2 g fiber; 118 mg sodium; 189 mg potassium

Recipe courtesy of EatingWell.com

**Florida Blue**   
In the pursuit of health™

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